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NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS

"RIGHT" AND "LEFT" IN THE HOMERIC HEXAMETER

The earliest Greek definition of caesura in the dactylic hexameter is in Aristides Quintilianus (52 M) who lived probably in the third century A.D., and certainly not earlier than the second century. Before this time Varro (Aul. Gell. xviii. 15) had noticed the importance of the penthemimeral incision, but evidently knew nothing of the doctrine of caesura. This indicates that caesura was unrecognized until about the beginning of the Christian era. Many modern scholars, however, see a reference to the caesura *κατὰ τρίτον τροχαῖον* in the following passage from Aristotle *Metaphysics* 1093*a: λέγουσι δέ τινες ὅτι πολλὰ τοιαῦτα, οἷον αἵ τε μέσαι ἡ μὲν ἐννέα ἡ δὲ ὀκτώ, καὶ τὸ ἔπος δεκαεπτά, ἰσάριθμον τούτοις· βαίνεται δ' ἐν μὲν τῷ δεξιῷ ἐννέα συλλαβαῖς, ἐν δὲ τῷ ἀριστερῷ ὀκτώ*, i.e.,

ἐν τῷ ἀριστερῷ *ἐν τῷ δεξιῷ*
– ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ∧ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ – –
8 syllables 9 syllables

The scholium on the passage, which has come down to us under the name of Alexander, but is undoubtedly by a later writer (probably of the fifth or sixth century A.D.: Freundenthal, *Abhandl. d. Berl. Akad.*, 1884, 55), explicitly states the contrary (Arist. Scholia 832*a*, 36, Brandis): *βαίνεται δὴ ἐν μὲν τῷ δεξιῷ ἤτοι τῷ ἡμίσει τοῦ στίχου τῷ ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς ἕως τοῦ μέσου ἐν ἐννέα συλλαβαῖς, τῷ δ' ἀριστερῷ, τουτέστι τῷ λοιπῷ ἡμίσει τῷ ἀπὸ τοῦ μέσου ἕως τοῦ τέλους, ἐν ὀκτώ*, i.e.,

ἐν τῷ δεξιῷ *ἐν τῷ ἀριστερῷ*
– ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ ∧ – ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑ – –
9 syllables 8 syllables

The first modern scholar to question this interpretation of the scholiast was Bonitz (*Comment. in Arist. Metaph.* [1848], 595), who argued that in reading and writing a verse the first part is on the left hand, and that in a hexameter containing five dactyls the caesura *κατὰ τρίτον τροχαῖον* divides the verse into 8+9 syllables. Bonitz has been followed by most modern writers on metric who have noticed the passage from the *Metaphysics:* Westphal, *Aristoxenus,* I (1883), 77; *Theorie d. musischen Künste,* I (1885), 185; Usener, *Altgriechischer Versbau* (1886), 41; Chaignet, *Essais de métrique grecque* (1887), 32; Grossmann, *De doctrinae metricae reliquis ab Eustathio servatis,* Strassburg (1887), 28; Engelbrecht, *Die Cäsuren des homerischen Hexameters,* in *Serta Harteliana* (1896), 300, and Gleditsch, *Metrik*³ (1901), 116. Bergk, *Poet. Lyr. Gr.*, III (1882), 655; Amsel, *De vi atque indole rhythmorum quid veteres iudicaverint,* Breslau (1887), 5, and Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Berliner Klassikertexte*, V, 2 (1907), 141, follow the interpretation of the scholiast. An examination of the evidence seems to prove conclusively that the scholiast was right.

The Greeks, for superstitious or other reasons, were inclined to associate the notion, τὸ δεξιόν, with the first part or beginning of all things which fall within the category of space. The first division of the line of battle was the right wing (cf., for example, Hdt. vi. 111, where the Plataeans on the left wing are called τελευταῖοι). Aristotle himself repeatedly uses δεξιόν of the beginning of that which moves: *Hist. Anim.* 498*b*, ἡ δ' ἀρχὴ (sc. τῆς κινήσεως) ἀπὸ δεξιῶν πᾶσιν (Grossmann, *loc. cit.*). The reason for this nomenclature is given in *De incessu anim.*, 705*b*: ὅθεν μὲν γάρ ἐστι τοῦ σώματος ἡ τῆς κατὰ τόπον μεταβολῆς ἀρχὴ φύσει, τοῦτο μὲν δεξιὸν ἑκάστῳ. In the same way the east was held to be on the right-hand side because the motion of the universe was thought to begin there: *De caelo* 285*b*, δεξιὸν γὰρ ἑκάστου λέγομεν, ὅθεν ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κατὰ τόπον κινήσεως (A. P. Wagener, *Popular Associations of Right and Left in Roman Literature*, Baltimore [1912], 53). As the division of the universe into right and left parts seems to have originated with the Pythagoreans (cf. *De caelo* 284*b*, Wagener, *loc. cit.*), the passage just cited has an immediate bearing on the interpretation of the passage under discussion, for there, too, Aristotle is quoting the Pythagoreans (Bonitz, *op. cit.*, 594).

This tendency to regard the beginning of a thing which is associated with motion, or the first part of that which is located in space, as on the right-hand side likewise prevails among the ancient writers on metric: Marius Victorinus 182, 14 K, "tragica [sc. forma] erit, quae *dextros* pedes recipit spondeos, id est [impares], primum tertium quintum; *sinistros* iambos, id est secundum quartum sextum, ut divi potentes, ferte lassatis opem"; 81, 28 K, "et tragicum [sc. genus] quidem, cuius in versu erunt *dextri* spondei, *sinistri* iambi, id est disparibus pares subditi," etc.; that is, the first foot of the dipody is on the *right;* Diomedes 504, 32 K, "dactylum numquam recipit nisi in *dextris* pedibus . . . . in *sinistris* vero quem libet . . . . extra dactylum." The early Greek metricians used δεξιός in a similar sense: Eustathius 1398, 56, καὶ οἱ παλαιοὶ μετρικοὶ τὴν ἐν τοῖς ἔπεσι πρώτην χώραν ἤγουν τὸν πρῶτον πόδα δεξιὰν χώραν ἔλεγον (Grossmann, *loc. cit.*); *Berliner Klassikertexte*, V, 2, 140 (papyrus fragment of about the third century A.D.),

ἡνίκ' ἂν ᾖ σπονδεῖος ὁ δεξιός, ἄν τε τροχαῖος
σὺν τούτῳ κατ' ἴαμβον ἐνόπλιος ὣς διάκειται.

In view of what is known of the κατ' ἐνόπλιον form of the hexameter, Gleditsch (Bursian's *Jahresbericht*, CXLIV [1909], 80) thinks that δεξιός should refer to the third or last foot of each trimeter. But as the two verses from the *Iliad* which are cited in the fragment with the evident intention of illustrating this rule,

[B 698] $\overline{\text{τῶν}}$ $\overline{\text{αὖ}}$ Πρωτεσίλαος ἀρήιος ἡγεμόνευεν,
[B 710] τῷ δ' ἅμα τεσσαράκοντα μέλ$\overline{\text{α}}$ιν$\overline{\text{α}}$ι νῆες ἕποντο,

have the spondee in the first and fourth feet of the hexameter, respectively, the anonymous writer clearly uses δεξιός of the *first* foot of the trimeter (so Professor von Wilamowitz in his commentary on the fragment).

Metricians likewise regarded the first three feet of the hexameter as ἐν τῷ δεξιῷ: Mar. Vict. 108, 16 K, "Arma virumque cano . . . . Huius incisioni quae syllaba clauditur, si alteras duas adicias, ut tertium pedem trissylabon compleas, erit hoc [penthemimeres] trimetrum δεξιόν." It is to be noted that this *colon dextrum* or ἀρκτικόν (Mar. Vict. 74, 8 K) contains exactly nine syllables, the same number which Aristotle says are found ἐν τῷ δεξιῷ of the hexameter. Plotius, 514, 27 K, likewise calls three dactyls *hemidexium trimetrum*, giving a Greek example: graecum exemplum [hemidexium] quod repperi tribus dactylis constans, ut ξεῖνε τὸν Ἀρχεβίου τάφον."

Finally, we must apply the ordinary rules of interpretation to the passage itself. The order of the words is significant. If Aristotle, or rather the Pythagoreans whom he quotes, had meant to indicate by τὸ δεξιόν the *last* part of the verse, it is reasonable to suppose that the reverse order would have been used: ἐν μὲν τῷ ἀριστερῷ . . . . ἐν δὲ τῷ δεξιῷ, for it is not natural in counting syllables to begin at the end of the verse. Furthermore, βαίνομαι refers, not to caesura, but merely to the division of the verse into feet (or dipodies): Ar. Quint. 50 M, τὸ μὲν γὰρ [sc. δακτυλικὸν] καθ' ἕνα βαίνεται πόδα: Dion. Hal. *De comp. verb.* iv, τοῦτο τὸ μέτρον (M 433 ff.) ἡρωικόν ἐστιν . . . . κατὰ πόδα δακτυλικὸν βαινόμενον.

To sum up the evidence: the order of the words, the meaning of βαίνομαι, the use of δεξιός, by the Greeks generally and by Aristotle in particular, to denote the beginning, and the universal custom among ancient writers on metric of denoting by δεξιός not only the beginning of a metrical unit but also the dactylic trimeter of nine syllables leave no room for doubt that the passage from the *Metaphysics* means that the first three feet of the dactylic hexameter which consists of five dactyls and one spondee, contain one more syllable than the last three. The passage therefore cannot be used to prove that either the doctrine or the phenomenon of caesura was recognized as early as the time of Aristotle.

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ON PLAUTUS *Bacchides* 434

The accepted text for *Bacchides* 433–34 is as follows: "cum librum legeres, si unam peccavisses syllabam [434] fieret corium tam maculosum quamst nutricis pallium." The speaker, Lydus, who has been recounting the severity of the old-fashioned education, ends by saying, in the quoted